

9. OCCURRENCE OF THE EASTERN MARSH HARRIER  
*CIRCUS AERUGINOSUS SPILONOTUS* KAUP IN CORBETT NATIONAL PARK:  
A RANGE EXTENSION

During March 1992, a juvenile Eastern Marsh Harrier *Circus spilonotus* was observed in Corbett National Park in northern Uttar Pradesh (29°31' N, 70°41' E). The harrier was frequently seen for 5/6 days quartering the open grasslands of the Dhikala Chaur and along the Ramganga river in the Park. Its identity was confirmed later by William S. Clark through photographs. Once treated as a race of the Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*, it is now considered a separate species (Amadon and Bull 1988, Howard and Moore 1991). The forests of the north central Sivaliks and Terai which were once contiguous are today disjointedly so with the forested foothills and Duars of the North-east, facilitating east to west movement of avifauna. The species breeds in the eastern central Asian steppes and winters in the Orient and Eastern India (Brown and Amadon 1968). It has not been previously recorded west of Assam (Ali and Ripley 1978). Therefore, the sighting in Corbett signifies an

important range extension and the first record for the park. However, it needs to be determined over a period of time whether the species is a vagrant or a regular winter visitor to the north central Sivaliks. Two additional sightings in the Andaman Islands and at Periyar Tiger Reserve in Kerala (Eames 1991) need further confirmation and would greatly extend the southward range from the main north-eastern wintering grounds. Special thanks to Dave Ferguson of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service which funded the BNHS raptor project for infrastructural support, Mr R. S. Bhadauria, I.F.S., C.C.F. U.P. (Wildlife) who readily gave permission for field work and Mr A. S. Negi, Field Director, Corbett, who provided all facilities and to William S. Clark.

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10. LONGEST LONGEVITY RECORD FOR THE LESSER SANDPLOVER  
*CHARADRIUS MONGOLUS PALLAS*

Among the waders, the lesser sand plover is one of the most abundant winter visitor to India. In south India about 8000 individuals have been ringed by the Bombay Natural History Society's Bird Migration Project. At Point Calimere (10° 18' N; 75° 51' E) ringing waterbirds has been carried on for the last 12 years. Previously ringing was done between 1969-1973. A few individuals of some species ringed between 1969-73 were retrapped between 1980-82. After that in 1990 and 1991 two lesser sand plover ringed in 1970 and 1971 at Point

Calimere were retrapped after 18 and 20 years respectively. The details are as follows:

Ring No.	Date of ringing	Date of recapture	Time interval
AB 57508	24-11-1971	31-1-1990	18 years
AB 49238	29-11-1970	5-1-1991	20 years

As there is no previous published record on the longevity of this species, it is a very interesting longevity record for the wader researchers. Being eastern species, the lesser sand plover and

greater sand plover *Charadrius leschenaultii* have not been studied extensively, as they migrate along the Australasian flyway which has not been monitored earlier. Other related species such as kentish plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*, little ringed plover *Charadrius dubius*, and ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula* have been studied extensively along the East Atlantic flyway and their longevity have been documented based on the ringing and recapture dates. However, the recorded longevity period for the above three

species is about 10 years (Cramp and Simmons 1983, THE BIRDS OF THE WESTERN PALAEARCTIC, Vol. 3.). Hence, the present longevity record of 20 years for the lesser sand plover is the longest among all the plovers.

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#### 11. SIGHTING OF LITTLE GULL *LARUS MINUTUS* PALLAS AT BHAVNAGAR NEW PORT, GUJARAT

Since the late Dr Salim Ali reported seeing flocks of *Larus minutus* (JBNHS 71: 609-610) in the Great Rann of Kachchh, in 1956, 1957 and 1960, we have come across them [10 km, SE. of Bhavnagar City (21° 46' N, 72° 11' E)] on January 12, 1992. Three individuals of these birds in a flock of Brownheaded Gulls, *L. brunnicephalus* were seen. They were half the size of the Brownheads, and had a black bill, an indistinct spot behind eye, light grey on the wings and white on rest of the body.

This gull is an accidental vagrant to the In-

dian subcontinent, there being only one specimen collected by Walter Koelz from Ladakh.

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#### 12. DUETTING IN THE GREAT HORNED OWL, *BUBO NIPALENSIS* HODGSON (STRIGIFORMES: STRIGIDAE)

(With a text-figure)

While staying at Nagarahole National Park, Karnataka from 7-13 February 1990 the senior author had the opportunity to record owl calls which were made intermittently near his bungalow almost every night. The calls were recorded around 0300 hours on 8 February with a Sony Walkman Professional Model WM-D6 and an ECM- 929LT stereo microphone. On listening to the recording the next morning I was surprised to find that the three note call had a distinctive stereophonic effect with the first and third notes being of lower amplitude than the middle note, which came from a different direction. A total of 10 calls were recorded, 7 consisted of three notes, and 3 consisted of single notes. The single note

calls are identical to the first element of the three note calls. It seems quite clear on listening to the recording that there are two owls vocalizing, although this was not apparent to my unaided ear when initially recording the owls. The single calls appear to be "prompting calls" or unanswered duets; our interpretation of the recording is as follows: when bird B answered the first note, bird A always produced the third note of the sequence.

To examine spectral and temporal features, we analyzed the calls with a Kay Elemetrics DSP 5500 Sona-Graph. Notes one and three of the seven hypothesized duets were similar in amplitude and frequency, while the intervening note was always louder and of lower frequency